Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-9.   (canceled).

Claim 10.   (currently amended) A method for processing data structured in frames, the method comprising the steps of:

selecting a particular code mode from a plurality of predefined code modes;

source-coding data bits, contained in a frame, in accordance with the particular code mode;

identifying the particular code mode via at least one mode bit contained in the frame; and

channel-coding a first portion of the data bits and the at least one mode bit <u>in the same way for all the source bit rates, voice coding rates and code modes being used and</u> independently of the particular code mode,

wherein the channel-coded data bits and the source-coded data bits are contained within the same data frame to be transmitted.

Claim 11.   (previously presented) A method for processing data structured in frames as claimed in claim 10, wherein the step of selecting the particular code mode includes matching the particular code mode to at least one of a quality of a transmission channel and a network load.

Claim 12.   (previously presented) A method for processing data structured in frames as claimed in claim 10, wherein the at least one mode bit contains at least one of signaling information and information for describing reception quality.

Claim 13.   (previously presented) A method for processing data structured in frames as claimed in claim 10, the method further comprising the steps of:

using convolution codes for the step of channel coding; and

selecting the first portion of the data bits as a function of a length of the convolution code.

Claim 14.   (previously presented) A method for processing data structured in frames as claimed in claim 10, the method further comprising the step of:

using the first portion of the channel-coded data bits for channel decoding of the at least one mode bit.

Claim 15.   (previously presented) A method for processing data structured in frames as claimed in claim 14, wherein the first portion of the data bits is channel-coded consistently for different code modes in the process of decoding.

Claim 16.   (previously presented) A method for processing data structured in frames as claimed in claim 14, wherein the at least one mode bit is channel-decoded only once.

Claim 17.   (currently amended)   A system for processing data structured in frames, comprising:

a frame containing data bits which are source-coded in accordance with a particular code mode, the particular code mode being selected from a plurality of predefined code modes, the frame further containing at least one mode bit for identifying the particular code mode of the data bits; and

a processor unit, via which a first portion of the data bits and the at least one mode bit are channel-coded in a manner that is <u>the same for all the source bit rates, voice coding rates and code modes being used and</u> independent of the particular code mode,

wherein the channel-coded data bits and the source-coded data bits are contained within the same data frame to be transmitted.

Claim 18.   (previously presented)   A system for processing data structured in frames as claimed in claim 17, wherein, via the processor unit, the first portion of the channel-coded data bits is also used for channel decoding the at least one mode bit.